



Trail Talk

January & February

2014

January met us with some frigid temperatures but Team Conasauga forged ahead. The small group that was able to make the trip up to Murrays Lake and the Lower Conasauga River Trailhead did a great job and was able to complete the task at hand.

Knowing the weather was going to be tough we picked a short section of the Conasauga River Trail to focus on for the January workday. The group size was perfect. **Chuck Brock, Jim Leatherwood, Wanda Brown, David Tanner, Matt Stenson, Caroline Pedersen, and Miles Wise** braved the cold to help the Cohutta Wilderness. We started the day by hiking straight down to the river to warm up. Our first task was to break down the large stone sofas visitors had made at the large campsite just down river from the trail. The stones were heavy but we removed all that were not frozen securely to the ground. This made the campsite look 100x better. After that the folks made their way back up the mountain weed whipping the encroaching mountain laurel. Once they had made their way back to the trailhead some folks traded out the weed whips for pulaskis and rakes to work on the waterbars on the upper section. Big thanks to Chuck, Jim, and Wanda who lead the afternoon activities since I had to leave to help with other district projects. Also this was Matt Stenson and Caroline Pedersen's first outing. They did a great job and we hope to see them again.

Contrary to January's cold temperatures and the mid-February snow storm, the February, 22 workday was Fabulous. A beautiful day, a large turnout, what more could you ask for. For this workday we headed west to the old Armuchee District to work on Keown Falls trail. We had 21 volunteers, six of which



Deede and Robert Edmonson

were new. **Michael Heninger, Charlie Crider, Gail Milner, Jim Bishop, Jim Leatherwood, Tom Blackwell, Tannis Blackwell, Amos Burrell, Tom Owens, Wanda Brown, Larry Thomas, Miles Wise, Deede Edmonson, Robert Edmonson, and Johnathan Currier** came out to enjoy the day. Our new members were **Pat Devine, Tom Parson, Louis Bondurant, Bonnie Currier, Blaze Bower, and David Starks.**

Most of the group worked to install waterbars on the south side of the trail heading towards the falls. It was tough going because of the rocky terrain but the trail is draining now better than it has in years. A smaller group worked on the north side of the trail, pruning through the old fire scar just below the falls pushing back the encroaching Virginia pines. We all met up at the Keown Falls overlook to enjoy the sun and the view before heading on to work sections of the Johns Mountain trail. After finishing all the waterbars, pruning, even cutting a few trees everyone headed down to the picnic area for the after work fellowship. Many THANKS for your hard work and we hope to see all the new faces again soon.



Volunteers and Trail users enjoying the view at Keown Falls Overlook



On March the 3rd we had a meeting between the Conasauga Ranger District and the Team Conasauga Board members. In attendance were **Troy Brown, Wanda Brown, Jim Leatherwood, Larry Thomas, Jim Bishop, Robert Edmondson, Jeff Gardner, Karen Larsen, Ryan Farr, and Kevin Vasalinda**. The meeting was a very productive one. No major changes came out of the meeting however a few small initiatives have been started that I would like to make you aware of. First we finalized the dates for the rest of the year and I will be listing them below. The locations have not been finalized but at least you can save the dates. The locations will be out very soon. Also we changed the August Working Weekend #73 to a **Saturday-Sunday** trip. This is a change we would like to try, nothing set in stone. In addition to that, you will notice we have added two new workdays in October and December. We would like to put the crew leader program to work by assigning a volunteer crew leader for each work event. I still plan on attending all work days in the future but if a scheduling conflict that cannot be avoided does arise this will make for an easy transition of leadership. It will also provide training opportunities for those who have taken the class and want to take the next step in volunteer leadership. For those of you that have the training more information will be coming soon. Thanks again to all the attendees for participating in this good meeting.

Dates for the Rest of the Year:

April 12, 2014 – Chickamauga Creek trail *waterbars and trimming*

May 2-3, 2014 – Rough Ridge *north end waterbars*
(Working Weekend #72)

June 7, 2014 – Lower Emery Creek trail *trimming and tree removal*
(National Trails Day)

July 19, 2014 – Rice Camp trail *trimming (tornado), waterbars, and campsites*

August 16-17, 2014 – Jacks River trail *weed whipping between Horseshoe Bend and Rice Camp*
(Working Weekend #73)

September 20, 2014 – Chestnut Lead trail *weed whipping and campsites*
(National Public Lands Day, Wilderness 50th Celebration)

October 4, 2014 – East Cowpen trail *water bars in from Rice Camp trail*

October 25, 2014 – Volunteer Appreciation Picnic @ Pocket Campground Pavilion

November 14-15, 2014 – Beech Bottoms Campsite Maintenance
(Working Weekend #74)

December 2, 2014 – Annual Board Meeting 6p.m. @ Conasauga District Office

December 13, 2014 – TBA *open for now*



For more information on activities and events happening on the Conasauga Ranger District, please check out the following links to the various associations who are committed to helping us provide a safe, enjoyable trail experiences for our forest users...

Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA): www.bmta.org

Backcountry Horsemen of Northwest Georgia (BCHNWG): www.bchnwg.org

Backcountry Horsemen of North Georgia (BCHNG): www.bchng.org

Northwest Georgia Southern Off-Road Bike Association (NWGA SORBA): www.nwgasorba.org

Georgia Pinhoti Trail Association: www.pinhoti.info

Appalachian Trail Association (GATC): www.georgia-atclub.org

Ellijay Mountain Biking Association (EMBA): www.ellijaymountainbike.org

Southern Off-Road Bike Association (SORBA): www.sorba.org or www.ngwasorba.org

Co-Trails: www.cotrails.org



Any interested people please contact me at kvasalinda@fs.fed.us. Thanks and see you next time.

~Kevin~